

ORNITHOLOGY.—*Diagnosis of a new genus of Anatidae from South America.* HARRY C. OBERHOLSER, Bureau of Biological Survey.

The genus *Alopochen* Stejneger, as at present constituted, contains two recent and three fossil species. The former are *Alopochen aegyptiaca*, from Africa, and *Alopochen jubata*, from South America. Such widely separated ranges naturally raise a question regarding the generic identity of these two living species, which doubt has already found expression in the statement of the most recent authority on the family Anatidae.¹ Examination now shows that these two species are really generically different; and since *Anas aegyptiaca* Linnaeus is the type of *Alopochen*, a new generic name is necessary for *Anser jubatus* Spix.

Neochen,² gen. nov.

Chars. gen.—Similar and nearest to *Alopochen* Stejneger, but bill smaller, relatively shorter, and more conical, little more than one-half the length of head (instead of nearly as long), its height at base more than one-half the length of the exposed culmen (instead of much less); exposed culmen about one-half the length of the tarsus (instead of much more); vertical outline of culmen more concave; angle of feathers on the base of the culmen sharper and more prominent (less rounded), the reentrant angle of the bare area on each side of the culmen deeper and more pronounced; tertials and scapulars very much narrower and more pointed; nostrils apparently more elongated.

Type.—*Anser jubatus* Spix.

Remarks.—Concerning the proper applicability of the name *Alopochen* Stejneger, a few remarks may not be out of place in this connection. This generic term was originally proposed by Dr. L. Stejneger³ in the text of a popular account. The name there appears simply in the combinations *Alopochen aegyptiaca* and *Alopochen jubata*, without mention of a type species or of any reason for the change. The type of *Alopochen* must, therefore, be determined by subsequent designation. Count Salvadori, in the work to which reference has already been made,⁴ quotes *Alopochen* as equivalent to *Chenalopex* Stephens,⁵ but gives no

¹ Salvadori, Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. **27**: 166. 1895.

² *Néos*, novus; *Xῆν*, anser.

³ Stand. Nat. Hist. **4**: 140-141. 1885.

⁴ Cat. Birds Brit. Mus. **27**: 166. 1895.

⁵ Gen. Zool. **12**: 41. 1824. (Type by monotypy, *Anas aegyptiaca* Linnae).

other indication of type. Lest a question should arise regarding this as a fixation of type, we here definitely designate *Anas aegyptiaca* Linnaeus as the type of *Alopochen* Stejneger. Salvadori uses the name *Chenalopex* Stephens⁵ for the group, evidently overlooking the fact that it is preoccupied by *Chenalopex* Dumont,⁶ and by *Chenalopex* Vieillot;⁷ which preoccupation is doubtless the occasion for the original introduction of the generic name *Alopochen* by Dr. Stejneger.

The type and only species of *Neochen* will now stand as *Neochen jubata* (Spix).

The taxonomy of the genus *Alopochen* has apparently given authors more or less trouble. Dr. Stejneger⁸ associates it with the spur-winged geese (subfamily Plectropterinae), while Count Salvadori⁹ includes it among the Anatinae. It seems to be, however, excepting, of course, the above separated *Neochen*, most closely allied to *Rhodonessa* Reichenbach and *Asarcornis* Salvadori. In fact, these four genera, together with *Sarkidiornis* Eyton, and probably also the fossil *Centronis* Andrews, form a rather homogeneous group, which differs externally from the Plectropterinae in lacking the spur on the wing, as well as in having the head fully feathered, and which may be distinguished by the subfamily name of *Sarkidiorni'hinae*.

⁶ Dict. Sci. Nat. **8**: 393. 1817. (Type by original designation, *Alca impennis* Linnaeus).

⁷ Nouv. Dict. Hist. Nat. **24**: 132. 1818. (Type by implication, *Alca impennis* Linnaeus).

⁸ *Loc. cit.*

⁹ *Loc. cit.*